

# Hawes and High Abbotside Parish Council

## Minutes of the Meeting of 9<sup>th</sup> November 2015 held at the Dales Countryside Museum at 7.15pm

**Present:** Cllrs J Blackie (Chairman), Mrs S Alderson, Ms D Allen, Ms A Caygill, G DiDuca, A Fawcett, B Fawcett, S Hunter, Mrs A Rhodes, I Woolley.

**In Attendance:** Mr I King (Clerk), Mr C McKeon (Corporate Director and Monitoring Officer, Richmondshire District Council – RDC), Mr S Wears (Manager, Environmental Health Department, RDC) and 10 members of the public.

1. **The Minutes of the Meetings of 6<sup>th</sup> July 2015 and of 7<sup>th</sup> September 2015 (including a Confidential Annexe) were accepted as a true record, and signed by the Chairman. There were no Matters Arising.**

2. **Chairman's Items**

a: **Foul Smells in Hawes**

Callum McKeon said that it is apparent that this is a recurring problem, happening in hot weather at times when Hawes is full of visitors. This means that it is not a statutory nuisance, but a problem with infrastructure, which means that it becomes a statutory duty, certainly involving Yorkshire Water (YW), to address the problem. He emphasised that the RDC is happy to be involved in resolving the issue, for as long as it takes.

Callum McKeon added that contrary to the impression that came across at the September meeting of the Parish Council RDC has a contingency budget to cover the cost of obtaining expert advice on Environmental Health issues, and as the Director in charge of the EH Department he would not hesitate to use it as required to try to resolve the foul smell issues in Hawes.

Mr Wears added that he has received 4 complaint forms since the last meeting. He and his staff have visited Hawes 10 times between 1<sup>st</sup> September and 26<sup>th</sup> October – but have not detected any smells. The Environmental Health Department does want to help but, if it is a sewage infrastructure problem, it is outside its powers. They will continue to monitor the situation.

Mr Rob Ward said that the smell has not happened for weeks, but wondered why the RDC staff did not tell anyone that they were coming to Hawes. He had sent in a letter to RDC and not received a reply, so also had Mrs Woods, but had received no response. Similarly, Mr Christen Weston, from the Penny Garth Café, has filled in forms and written to Environmental Health at the RDC but had received no response. Mr Ward insisted that the culprit has been proved to be Hydrogen Sulphide, which is a poisonous gas, and not just “a smell”. The problem has been ongoing to his knowledge for 40 years.

However in 2009 working together as a community led by the Chairman, Cllr John Blackie, and the Parish Council, and with the help of Michael Denny from Yorkshire

Water, there was a significant improvement. Unfortunately this year the smell had returned again not just on the odd day, but for as long as a week or more at a time.

Mr McKeon said that YW is responsible if this does prove to be a sewage problem. He noted that YW has been doing a lot of local work. Mr Ward added that YW has sealed 6 manhole covers and replaced some valves.

In summarising, the Chairman said that it is now accepted that this is a sewage infrastructure problem. He had received an email from David Hartley, MD of the Wensleydale Creamery, stating that future development of this major local employer is being hampered by YW's restrictions on effluent discharge. Mr Hartley wants to be involved in any initiative established to resolve the issue.

Cllr Blackie added that the RDC will be a powerful ally in this campaign. He said that Michael Denny of YW is being very helpful, but proving reluctant to actually attend a Parish Council Meeting, at least at this time. Mr Wears offered his mobile phone number – so that he can be contacted quickly (0798 341 1019). Steve Barker from NYCC Highways had visited Rob Ward to thank Rob for entering into the street drainage system to replace a valve.

**The Parish Council resolved unanimously that the Chairman's suggestion of convening a high level meeting in the New Year involving all the key parties to discuss the recurring outbreak of unpleasant smells in the town, and the capacity of the sewage infrastructure to meet present and future demands placed upon it.**

Callum McKeon offered the assistance of RDC to organise this meeting.

**b: Fly Tipping of carpet into Gayle Beck**

Some time ago some carpet, underlay and lino had been thrown into Gayle Beck, probably from the bridge. Mr I. Fraser, a Director of Gayle Mill Trust, had written to the Council recounting his efforts to get the issue sorted.

He telephoned the Environment Agency, which referred him to another department, which referred him to the NYCC Flood Agency, which told him that it was the responsibility of the riparian land owner.

A staff member from the Environmental Health Office at RDC had been expected at Gayle Mill on the Monday, but had not turned up. Callum McKeon and Stuart Wears promised to investigate this.

**c: Yorkshire Dales National Park (YDNP) Extension**

The Chairman reported that a 24% extension of the YDNP into adjoining areas of Cumbria and Lancashire had been decided by the Government, in spite of strong objections from all the Councils involved (NYCC, RDC, Lancashire CC, Lancashire City Council, Cumbria CC, Eden District Council, and all the Upper Dales Parish Councils).

The YDNP Authority (YDNPA) itself had supported the extension, but only on the condition that it received additional funding to reflect delivering its land stewardship

duties over the larger area, and that the representation on the YDNPA was increased so the existing membership was retained whilst the newly extended areas were allocated new membership on the Authority.

**The Government's decision fails to address these 2 conditions so the Parish Council agreed with the Chairman that the YDNPA had come away from the extension debate empty-handed.**

Elizabeth Truss MP, Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, had announced the decision on a flying visit to the Wensleydale Creamery, giving no opportunity for local people or politicians to meet her. There was no mention whatsoever of any of the robust objections to the expansion. The BBC and several leading newspapers had not been invited to the Creamery to cover the announcement.

There will be a further government consultation on the membership of the YDNPA once the Park is extended, but the Parish Council is concerned that it will result in a foregone conclusion approach that the original consultation on the extension has clearly turned out to be.

If the number of Authority members remains the same then representation in the existing parts of the YDNP will be diluted, including most certainly that from the Upper Dales at County, District and Parish Council level, and Councillors from distant communities of Cumbria and Lancashire will take part in planning decisions about areas of which they know nothing.

In short the Chairman said the voice and influence of the Parish, and the Upper Dales in general, will be stifled, unless the existing representational membership of the YDNPA is retained in the new arrangements.

**The Parish Council was very perturbed by this news, and resolved unanimously to support its Chairman in his campaign to secure adequate representation for its views on the new YDNPA.**

**d: Wensleydale School, Leyburn**

The Chairman reported on a letter from Pete Dwyer, Corporate Director, NYCC Children's and Young People's Services) to the Chairman of Governors of The Wensleydale School, who is David Hartley from the Wensleydale Creamery. He had circulated this letter to all members of the Parish Council in advance of the meeting.

Mr Dwyer said in the letter that NYCC, as the Local Education Authority (LEA), had very significant concerns around the School's financial projections, and suggested that the 6th form and Post-16 educational provision is likely to become unviable in the near future.

Cllr Blackie had replied to this letter, inviting Mr Dwyer to join the Little White Bus Service that takes Post-16 students to Darlington QE College, leaving Hawes at 6.50 am and returning back to Hawes at around 7.15 pm.

This is used by several local young people to enable them to take vocational courses at the Darlington QE College, and means that they have a 14 hour day / 70 hours a week commitment in order to undertake their Post-16 education. 4.5 hours each day will be taken up with travel.

Hawes & High Abbotside Post-16 students will be the most seriously disadvantaged of any students in North Yorkshire if the 6<sup>th</sup> Form / Post-16 provision closure at The Wensleydale School goes ahead.

The Chairman argued that there is a need to bolster provision at Leyburn by seeking imaginative alternatives such as Darlington QE 6<sup>th</sup> Form College, which has a renowned reputation for providing excellent Post-16 education, opening an outreach centre there. The Wensleydale School, with just 48 students in its 6<sup>th</sup> Form, could no longer continue on its own. Students (and their parents) who used to attend there were voting with their feet to go elsewhere.

Failing an initiative designed to deliver collaboration with another educational provider, then the Chairman argued it was essential to speed up the transport links to another centre of Post-16 educational provision.

Cllr Di Duca asked about the provision at Richmond School, and whether the two schools could be working together on Post-16 provision. Callum McKeon (whose wife teaches at and son attends the Richmond School) said that there is some low-level cooperation in some subject areas between Richmond and Wensleydale Schools, but that there is nothing at the strategic level.

He felt that the RDC would support any initiative to improve the situation, which could be easily resolvable if the institutions would work together.

Cllr Caygill, a teacher at Hawes Community Primary School, added that cooperation is very common between Primary Schools, so why not at Secondary School level ??

Cllr Di Duca said that a wide and varied curriculum is an essential part of Post-16 provision, and wondered why young people from Leyburn, Richmond and Bedale cannot be brought together for 6<sup>th</sup> form teaching at The Wensleydale School rather than having to go to Darlington.

**The Parish Council resolved unanimously to campaign strongly to retain an improved 6<sup>th</sup> Form / Post-16 provision at The Wensleydale School, by delivering this improvement through collaborative initiatives with other educational providers.**

**In the event that the 6<sup>th</sup> Form / Post-16 provision closed at the Wensleydale School the Parish Council would wish to see a much speedier and more direct college bus service from Hawes & High Abbotside to an alternative provision beyond Leyburn.**

**e: Hawes Community Primary School Parking Arrangements**

There has been a long-standing agreement negotiated by Cllr Blackie some 14 years ago that parents with children at the Hawes Community Primary School can park in the

Gayle Lane Car Park for a maximum of 20 minutes while taking their children to school or picking them afterwards.

Using the back entrance from the Car Park into the school is much safer and helps to reduce parking on the yellow lines on Gayle Lane. However, the new car parking regime based at Scarborough Borough Council had objected to this and Gary Hudson from the RDC had written to the School withdrawing the arrangement.

**The Head Teacher had contacted Cllr Blackie who then spoke directly to Callum McKeon, who overruled the decision and reinstated the maximum of 20 minutes free parking as long as it was not abused.**

**Callum McKeon confirmed this at the Parish Council meeting, and he asked that he personally should be informed of any overzealous action by the car parking attendants from SBC.**

The Head teacher had written thanking Cllr Blackie for his intervention so that this essential dispensation for parents and their children can be continued in the future.

**f: Rishi Sunak MP**

The new local MP had rejected the Council's invitation to attend one of its meetings, even though they gave him free choice of date and time.

Cllr Tony Fawcett (Vice Chairman), who had suggested the invitation, felt that this was "simply not good enough" and was further evidence that the Upper Dales are increasingly being marginalised.

Cllr Di Duca suggested that a meeting be arranged for all the Upper Dales Parish Councils in both Upper Wensleydale and Swaledale / Arkengarthdale (including Askrigg, Aysgarth, Bainbridge, Carperby, West Burton, Grinton, Arkengarthdale, Marske, Marrick, Melbecks, Muker, Reeth and Hawes & High Abbotside), and that Mr Sunak be invited to attend this Forum.

Cllr Rhodes (Manager of the Upper Wensleydale Community Office) commented that there had been a recent MP's Surgery at Leyburn but that he had not come up to Hawes. In the past the Surgeries conducted by William Hague MP used to be on the same day in the two towns.

**Council agreed to send a letter to Mr Sunak expressing its strong disappointment at his response and his apparent failure to continue to operate a Constituency Surgery in Hawes, and suggesting the idea of an Upper Dales Forum which he would be invited to address. It also agreed to send him copies of the Parish Council forthcoming Agendas and Minutes, so that he can be informed of the key current issues locally.**

**g: Stable Cottage, Appersett**

The Chairman outlined the background to a recent successful appeal to grant a Lawful Development Certificate for this property which he in his role as local Councillor had

submitted on behalf of Mrs Moira Metcalfe as he considered she had been treated unfairly by the YDNPA as Planning Authority.

Stable Cottage had been developed as a separate, self-contained annexe to Nether Bar East in 2002 as a home for Moira Metcalfe's mother after the death of her husband. Not only did the YDNPA refuse Moira Metcalfe's application submitted after the passing away of her mother, despite overwhelming evidence of a very convincing nature she had lived there since 2002 independently of Nether Bar East, but it went out of its way to make the process long and difficult, in the hope of brow-beating the applicant into submission.

However, once Cllr Blackie submitted the evidence for the appeal, the YDNPA lost interest in contesting the appeal, offering minimal evidence to support its case, and failed to turn up to a site visit it itself had arranged with the Appeal Inspector.

The Appeal Inspector's decision had strongly supported Moira Metcalfe's appeal, and noted that the YDNPA had not contested her evidence in support of the Appeal. However whilst a very satisfactory and inevitable conclusion it did not spare Moira Metcalfe going through the 18 months of worry and stress whilst she awaited the Appeal decision, which could have been avoided if the YDNPA had accepted the legitimacy of her case.

Instead and for no good reason the YDNPA's stubborn and obstructive approach had caused her some considerable mental and emotional suffering and made a mockery of its claim to be "fair-minded and reasonable" towards the local communities it has remit over.

**The Parish Council unanimously agreed with the concern of the Chairman, and resolved to strongly support a representation Cllr Blackie was going to make on the Stable Cottage appeal at the YDNPA Planning Committee meeting the next day.**

**h: NYCC Grit Bins**

The last meeting deferred a decision on the remaining 2 grit bins – by the Primary School and in the West End at Gayle - which NYCC Highways no longer wishes to fund. There was much condemnation about the approach NYCC Highways was taking on the financing of grit bins in the Upper Dales.

**After discussion Council resolved unanimously to offer the sum of £25 for both bins (neither of which is in good condition) as seen, tried and tested, and to replenish them as necessary from local sources.**

**i: Upper Dales Mobile Skip Service**

On its October visit to the Upper Wensleydale Business Park the Upper Dales Mobile Skip Service was met with unnecessary belligerence by a local businessman. The operators compromised by moving to an adjacent car park (by kind permission of The Good Life), but the selfish action of the local businessman threatened the continued provision of this essential and invaluable service which is very popular and extremely well used by an overwhelming majority of local people from the Upper Dales.

Prior to the UD Mobile Skip Service being re-located to the UW Business Park from Gayle Green it had been established that the roadway is public highway recently made up at some considerable cost by RDC to adoptable standards, and the landowner (Phillip Hall of SCS Structures) had granted permission for it to be staged on his land, which included the land below the road surface.

The UD Mobile Skip Service will return to the same location on Saturday 16<sup>th</sup> January 2016.

**The Parish Council was very disappointed to hear of the unacceptable conduct of the local businessman and stressed that it is very important to retain this invaluable service for local residents.**

**j: Residents' Parking**

Residents of houses on the north side of the A684 from the Penny Garth Café westwards had received a letter from NYCC Highways demanding that they remove “no parking” cones, bollards or notices or they would face enforcement action.

**The Chairman, Cllr John Blackie, emphasised that he had no involvement in the letter,** apart from taking a Highways Officer to look at the poor condition of the road surface where Gayle Lane meets the A684, and when he did this the Officer had spotted the bollards & etc in the roadway adjoining the pavement.

The Clerk read out a letter from Rachel Ellis of Myrtle House arguing for the introduction of a scheme for residents parking permits. Margaret Heseltine, attending the meeting, said she paid £95 per month for Council Tax, had only one window downstairs, and the daylight was often blocked by camper vans and large cars belonging to visitors parked directly outside her window sometimes for days on end.

The Chairman was very sympathetic to the idea, but he was not optimistic. He has seen many such applications rejected and successful ones are usually in larger town such as Harrogate. However he was reminded that Cumbria CC operate a resident's parking scheme in Dent.

**The Chairman will put it on the Agenda of the next NYCC Richmondshire Area Committee.** Cllr Di Duca wondered if we could undertake the administration ourselves if this should prove to be a stumbling block.

**k: Parish Council Noticeboards**

The Chairman announced that 2 new Parish Council noticeboards have been erected – in Appersett and Hardraw. He had successfully applied for a grant of £500 towards their cost (£730.20).

He has asked 2 local volunteers (Mary Grainger in Hawes and Clara Fawcett at The Carthouse Café in Hardraw) to be Notice-Board Monitors, including holding the keys and keeping the Board Notices tidy. Anybody wanting to display a notice on these boards

can approach Mary and Clara directly with a printed version, or leave one at the UW Community Office. **The Parish Council expressed its thanks to the two volunteers.**

**l: War Memorial**

At the Chairman’s request Cllr Woolley has taken on the liaison role on this project. He has been talking to Jim Spensely, who is keen to get on with building the memorial directly he is fit again from a bout of ill-health. **Cllr Woolley produced detailed drawings and a scale model to the meeting which were all approved by the Parish Council.**

He will bring samples of the material for the inscribed plates to the next meeting. There was a brief discussion about the exact location of the memorial on the green, and Richard Noble agreed to place a stake with an appropriate notice in the right place.

Cllr. Woolley read out a couple of drafts of the wording he was suggesting to be inscribed on the Plate of Remembrance and Dedication to be attached to the War Memorial.

**The Chairman said that the wording must be approved by the Parish Council and invited any Parishioner to submit their preferred version of this wording to the Parish Council.**

The Chairman considered that the words in dedication to the fallen should include ‘residents of Hawes & High Abbotside Parish’ within the inscription, and although the Plate on the Memorial Organ mentioned “Neighbourhood” he felt that in the passage of time since that Plate was engraved things had moved on with a desire to have a more specific geographical description of the local community those who had, or will in future, have given the lives for.

It was pointed out that Hawes has always included Gayle when being used to describe the Parish and indeed the Parish Council is called Hawes (& High Abbotside) PC, of which an important and intrinsic part of is Gayle.

**The Council was grateful to Cllr Woolley for all his work, and agreed on the size, design and location of the War Memorial.**

**Drafts of suggested versions of the wording to be inscribed on the Plate will be circulated to Councillors and be decided at a later date at a Parish Council meeting.**

**m: Tour de France Legacy Project**

It is anticipated that this will be the replacement of a bench near The Chippy although there had not been any response from the TdF Working Group in support of this suggestion as yet.

**n: Defibrillator for Hardraw**

The Chairman announced that the machine has arrived, and is awaiting installation.

**o: Gayle Green**



**It was agreed to delay the Public Meeting until Spring 2016.** The Chairman advised that the Community Opportunities Fund has closed for this financial year and it will not be until February that we will know about its availability in the Municipal Year 2016 / 2017. He would like to be able to go to a meeting with some idea of funding opportunities so that any project that came forward to provide an enduring enhancement of Gayle Green could be assessed for affordability.

**3. YDNPA Planning Decisions – October Planning Committee**

- a: Extra Care Housing Scheme proposed at Turfy Top, Hawes** – Refused unanimously by the Planning Committee (this in line with the Hawes + HA PC response).
- b: Café proposed at the Dales Countryside Museum, Hawes** – Approved unanimously by the Planning Committee, with one abstention by Cllr. John Blackie who having declared a personal interest in that he operated a café in the town centre was able to put forward, as the Hawes & High Abbotside Parish Council Chairman, the arguments the Parish Council held in support of refusal of the application, but to no avail.

Bob Belton of The Laburnham Tea Room said that it was apparent that the decision had been made amongst most of the Planning Committee members before the meeting started. He has made a formal complaint – one of his issues was that a last minute Survey of DCM visitors was quoted heavily at the meeting, but it was not made available to him until 2 days after it. He found that the use of statistics in that survey was highly questionable.

Cllr. Blackie supported his complaint. The Survey results were not available to members of the public at the meeting itself, as they should have been. Members of the Planning Committee could only access them via the YDNPA Intranet, and only then from the Monday morning ahead of the Tuesday Planning Committee meeting.

Interestingly in later correspondence the Survey was justified as a response to the concerns raised at the September meeting of Hawes & High Abbotside Parish Council yet it was not forwarded to the Clerk (Ian King) ahead of the Planning Committee meeting itself.

**4. Correspondence**

- a. Richmondshire DC – Precept Arrangements for 2015**

The Chairman noted that the Parish Council has had the same Precept for the past 3 years, and, in view of increasing demand on our resources as both RDC and NYCC cut back or cut out their services, proposed a modest 5% increase for 2016-17. This would add just over £1 for the year to a Band D Council Tax bill.

**Agreed unanimously.**

- b. NYCC Network Strategy Admin.** – Letter re Highways Sponsorship – **Noted.**
- c. Yorkshire Energy Partnership** - Renewable Technology Information Event – **Noted.**

- d. **NYCC Transport Planning** – Local Transport Plan Consultation – **Noted.**
- e. **Red Cross** – Appeal for support for a new Emergency Services Support Vehicle – **Noted.**
- f. **Health Watch** – Minutes of September Meeting

The Chairman said that he has had a couple of representations about the decision of the Central Dales Practice to stop taking telephone requests for repeat prescriptions. It was suggested that the Practice would be accommodating to people who do not have access to the requisite technology or lived at a distance from the two surgeries and did not often pass by.

- g. **Yorkshire Dales Millennium Trust** - Milestones (News and Views) – **Noted.**

**5. Financial Matters**

**a: Council agreed to pay the following Account:**

**JT Atkinson** – Bills for Yorks Water /Rob Ward - **£46.89**

**b: Council approved the payment of the following accounts since the last meeting:**

- i. **John Banks** – Grasscutting August - **£649**
- ii. **Cardiac Science** – Supply of Defibrillator, Hawes - **£1542** [*RDC Grant of £1500 to claim*]
- iii. **M Fothergill** – contribution to refurbishment of Community Field Store - **£350**
- iv. **John Banks** – Grasscutting September - **£569**
- v. **Abacus Playgrounds** – Work on resurfacing Play Park - **£8826** [*Grants of £7094.45 already received*]
- vi. **Stella Dinsdale** – Salary for Youth Club Leader - **£360**
- vii. **MA Walls** – Noticeboards for Appersett and Hardraw - **£730.20** [*RDC Grant of £500 already received*]
- viii. **MA Walls** – Installation of Defibrillator, Hawes - **£540** [*RDC Grant of £1500 to claim*]

**6. Current state of PC finances**

The Chairman had circulated a copy of the Cash Book updated to November. This showed a balance of £2637.04 to last until the end of April 2016.

**Unanimously approved.**

**7. Any Other Business**

- a: Cllr Woolley noted the repair of the collapsed bench by the Wensleydale Creamery, and proposed a Vote of Thanks to Mr M Webster. **Agreed.**

- b: **Council Website** - Cllr Rhodes suggested that the Council should have its own website, where copies of Agenda, Minutes and other documentation could be made

available to local residents. This could utilise a spare domain on the Community Office website agreement. **Agreed.**

**c: Venue for Meetings**

CLlr Hunter suggested that the Parish Council should refrain from using the DCM for its meetings wherever possible as it is a way of supporting the YDNPA, which ignores the Parish Council views on a regular basis. **The Parish Council agreed**, and decided that the Council will continue to meet at Gayle Institute whenever possible, and to seek out other venues. The Chairman reminded Councillors that the Community meeting room at The National School will soon be available

**The Meeting closed at 9.50pm.**

**Date of next meeting: Monday 4<sup>th</sup> January 2016 at 7.15 pm at Gayle Institute**